

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 2, 2005

The Honorable Charles H. Taylor
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Taylor and Ranking Member Dicks:

We ask that as you develop the Fiscal Year 2006 Appropriations bill on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, you include an increased level of funding for the Superfund program, which provides for the cleanup of our nation's most polluted toxic sites.

As you know, for the last fiscal year Congress provided only \$1.248 billion for Superfund cleanup, \$10 million less than the FY04 appropriated level. President Bush's FY06 budget proposes \$1.279 billion for Superfund, an increase of \$31 million over the FY05 appropriated level but \$102 million less than the FY05 budget request.

Increasing the Superfund allocation is especially important because expenditures have not been sufficient to meet cleanup needs in recent years. The EPA's Inspector General (IG) has found that inadequate funding has slowed the pace of cleanup at some sites and is preventing any activities from beginning at other sites. The IG has reported the shortfall totaled \$114.8 million for FY02 and \$174.9 million for FY03. The *Washington Post* ("Lack of Funding Slows Cleanup Of Hundreds Of Superfund Sites," 11/25/04) reported that the shortfall for FY04 was approximately \$250 million, a figure that the EPA has not disputed.

In fact, the EPA itself has admitted publicly the serious funding problems facing Superfund. On December 2, 2004, Assistant Administrator Thomas Dunne noted:

"For the last three years, we haven't started cleanup at some new sites. If we assume that EPA's budget will remain flat for the foreseeable future, construction funding could be delayed at more and more sites. Within a few years, unfunded cleanup work could total several hundred million dollars."

These shortfalls cannot continue. Inadequate funding for Superfund means that specific sites in some of our Congressional Districts will not see any new remediation work or will see work proceed at a much slower rate. This could mean serious long-term health consequences, especially for the nearly one in four Americans who live within four miles of a Superfund site, including 10 million children under the age of twelve. Cleaning up these sites is a serious public health and economic redevelopment priority and should be considered as such when you determine spending allocations in the FY06 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Frank Pallone, Jr.

Frank Pallone, Jr.

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